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STATE PASS TO AID

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION ON SECRETARY POWELL'S  
UN SPEECH

#### News Reports

-- Secretary Powell's U.N. speech yesterday received extensive coverage in the Jordanian press, though it competed for front-page space with the announcement of Jordan's general budget for the year 2003. All daily newspapers carried wire service reports about the Secretary's speech and featured photos of the

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Secretary during his speech. Reports were highlighted

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under banner color headlines. Further details and photos related to the Secretary's presentation were carried in inside pages in all papers.

-- Apart from two commentaries, no editorial commentary was yet noted on the topic (note: Secretary Powell's presentation began at 5:30 p.m.

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local time, concluding after the filing time of most of Jordan's opinion writers.)

#### Banner Headlines

-- Al-Dustour: "Powell presents 'information' that Baghdad describes as 'allegations'".  
-- Al-Arab Al-Yawm: "Powell presents 'the pretexts' for launching the war, while the Security Council continues to be divided".  
-- Al-Rai: "Powell's report accuses Iraq of owning banned weapons and of dealing with Al-Qa'eda".  
-- Jordan Times: "Powell presents US case for war".

#### Editorial Commentary

-- "Unconvincing evidence"

Centrist, influential among the elite English daily Jordan Times (02/06) editorializes: "Powell's 75-minute presentation contained little that was new. Many people will question the authenticity of these documents, and their mere presentation is unlikely to change many minds. Yet, even if we give the United States the benefit of the doubt, these new elements did not amount to convincing evidence of Iraqi non-compliance, or that Iraq presents any real or imminent danger to any party. On Powell's claims that Iraq has close links with Al-Qa'eda, we have to wonder why it is that reports from all of the leading intelligence agencies over the past two years consistently contradict this view. Powell presented precious little evidence in this regard, but made allegations which can only increase irrational fears about terrorism at a time when the war on terrorism is faltering precisely because the United States has incomprehensibly shifted the focus to Iraq. The battle against terrorism requires serious attention to the root causes that fuel support for such violence. Creating new myths about 'evil' individuals in order to achieve a political goal does not help, especially when the United States has a poor record of catching such individuals once it has built-up their reputations with sensational charges. We have every reason to believe that the Iraqi crisis can be solved by peaceful means and insist that all parties, including the United States and Iraq, should work tirelessly for that outcome."

-- "A few hours before saying 'I got it'"

Columnist Jawad Bashiti writes on the op-ed page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm

(02/06): "Powell's evidence is aimed to convince those who are skeptical and unsure about the crime of the twenty-first century that the United States is preparing to commit against the Iraqis and against humanity. The world has only to show the slightest bit of confidence and belief in Powell's evidence to be dragged, willingly or not, into a crime that is exactly like the Hiroshima crime in terms of the perpetrator, the tools, the victims and the consequences. The Bush administration has no other means to convince the American people of the necessity of this war except to scare and frighten it of the possibility of a new terrorist attack by Al-Qa'eda with chemical and biological weapons supplied by Saddam Hussein. The Americans must be made to view this war as a preventative measure. Without this link between Saddam Hussein's weapons and Osama bin Laden's terrorism, the Bush administration would not be able to frighten its citizens and then convince them that war is inevitable."

-- "A long American report"

Columnist Mohammad Kawash writes on the back page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (02/06): "The charges presented by the U.S. Secretary of State in his long report were weak and unconvincing to make a cover for a U.S.-launched war against Iraq. Despite this, we believe that Secretary Powell's presentation was the leader towards announcement of imminent war on Iraq. The United States must keep in mind that Arab and western countries want to stop the war and want to resolve the crisis peacefully, diplomatically and politically."  
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